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Message Text

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11
ACTION EA-14

INFO OCT-01 EUR-25 ADP-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 NSAE-00 NSCE-00

SSO-00 USIE-00 INRE-00 PM-07 H-02 INR-10 L-03 NSC-10

PA-03 RSC-01 PRS-01 SS-15 AID-20 DPW-01 IO-12 OMB-01

RSR-01 /127 W
---------- 008593
O R 230720 Z MAY 73
FM AMEMBASSY SAIGON
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 2035
INFO AMEMBASSY BUDAPEST
AMEMBASSY JAKARTA
AMEMBASSY OTTAWA
AMEMBASSY WARSAW
USDEL JEC PARIS
CINCPAC
USDAO SAIGON

C O N F I D E N T I A L SAIGON 9046

E. O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PARM PBOR MARR MOPS VC
SUBJECT: ICCS V TO INVESTIGATE ALLEGED US BOMBING

FOLLOWING SENT ACTION SAIGON INFO CAN THO NHA TRANG DANANG
FROM BIEN HOA MAY 23 REPEATED FOR YOU

QUOTE BIEN HOA 0138

1. ICCS REGION V CANDEL TOLD CONSUL EVENING MAY 22 THAT INVESTIGATION

OF ALLEGED US BOMBING IN NORTHERN LOC NINH DISTRICT, BINH LONG PRO-
VINCE, WOULD BEGIN MORNING MAY 23.

2. CENTRAL ICCS MILITARY COMMITTEE REPORTEDLY AGREED AFTERNOON
MAY 22 THAT TWO ICCS HELICOPTERS WOULD LEAVE SAIGON WITH PRG AND
GVN LIAISON OFFICERS ABOUT 0745, ARRIVING REGION V JMC COMPOUND
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0815 TO PICK UP THREE OFFICERS FROM EACH ICCS DELEGATION, AND LEAVE 0900 FOR LOC NINH, FLYING UP QL 13 IN SECURITY CORRIDOR 8 KM WIDE AND 1000 FEET HIGH. CANADIANS IN MILCOM AGREED TO SUCH A NARROW CORRIDOR, JUST THIS ONCE, TO AVOID GIVING SUPPORT TO COMMUNIST CHARGES THAT THEY WOULD OBSTRUCT INVESTIGATION OF ALLEGED U. S. VIOLATION. FROM LOC NINH, PRG WILL PROVIDE GROUND TRANSPORTATION TO SITE OF ALLEGED VIOLATION.

3. CANDEL WITH WHOM WE SPOKE LAST NIGHT WAS WORRIEDABOT POSSIBLE COMMUNIST AMBUSH OF ICCS CHOPPERS. SHOOT- DOWN IN QUANG TRI LAST MONTH, HE RECALLED, CAME ON FLIGHT INCLUDING ALL FOUR DELEGATIONS AND PRG LIAISON OFFICERS, TO WHICH PRG HAD INVITED ICCS. POLES HAVE BEEN ALMOST TO EAGER TO SET UP INVESTIGATION. CORRIDOR IS NARROW AND CHOPPERS FLYING BELOW 1000 FEET WOULD BE EASY TO HIT. TIMING OF SUCH AN INCIDENT MIGHT APPEAR PROPITIOUS TO PRG IN VIEW OF CURRENT CANADIAN REVIEW OF CONTINUED PARTICIPATION IN ICCS. TO MINIMIZE PROSPECTS OF COMMUNIST MISSILE " UP THE ARSE," CANDEL PLANS TO CAREFULLY REVIEW MAPS AND CONSULT EXTENSIVELY WITH OTHER DELEGATES, LIAISON OFFICERS, AND CHOPPER CREW BEFORE BOARDING. EVEN IF PRG LEADERSHIP INTENTIONS HONORABLE, CANDEL RECALLED THAT PRG TROOPS HAVE NO STANDING INSTRUCTIONS NOT TO SHOOT DOWN ICCS HELICOPTERS, AND IT TAKES AT LEAST SEVERAL DAYS TO PASS ORDERS DOWN PRG CHAIN OF COMMAND. CANDEL TOLD US HE HAD URGED REGION V CANDEL CHIEF THAT THEY GO ON SEPARATE CHOPPERS TO INCREASE CHANCES THAT AT LEAST ONE WILL LIVE TO TELL TALE OF POSSIBLE AMBUSH. IN NO CASE, SAID CANDEL, WOULD HE STAY OVERNIGHT IN NORTHERN LOC NINH.

4. CANDEL ALSO WAS CONVINCED THAT PRG WOULD HAVE SCENE AT ALLEGED VIOLATION SITE WELL STAGED, WITH BEAUTIFUL BOMB CRATERS, FRESHLY POLISHED BOMB FRAGMENTS, AND CAREFULLY COACHED WITNESSES. CANDEL REGRETTED THAT REPID EVOLUTION OF EVENTS HAD PRECLUDED DEVELOPMENT
OF LINES OF QUESTIONING LIKELY TO CREATE ELEMENT OF DOUBT -- FOR EXAMPLE, HE HAD ASKED FOR FLASH CARDS OF DIFFERENT AIRCRAFT, IN HOPES OF GETTING WITNESSES TO IDENTIFY, SAY, FRENCH MIRAGE AS GUILTY AIRCRAFT, BUT FLASH CARDS ARE NOT READY. CANDEL THOUGHT HE MIGHT BE FORCED TO FALL BACK ON POLISH- STYLE OBSTRUCTIONISM -- " YES, IT' S A HOLE IN THE GROUND, BUT HOW DO WE KNOW IT' S A BOMB CRATER?"

5. CANDEL PROMISED TO TELL US ABOUT THE INVESTIGATION IF AND
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WHEN HE RETURNS. SIGNED AWALKINSHAW UNQUOTE
WHITEHOUSE

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NMAFVVZCZ

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*** Current Handling Restrictions *** n/a
*** Current Classification *** CONFIDENTIAL

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: n/a
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 23 MAY 1973
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: willialc
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1973SAIGON09046
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: RR
Errors: n/a
Film Number: n/a
From: SAIGON
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1973/newtext/t19730552/aaaajpwf.tel
Line Count: 113
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE
Office: ACTION EA
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 3
Previous Channel Indicators:
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: n/a
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: willialc
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 20 AUG 2001
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <20-Aug-2001 by izenbei0>; APPROVED <09-Oct-2001 by willialc>
Review Markings:

Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
30 JUN 2005

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: <DBA CORRECTED> gwr 980227
Subject: ICCS V TO INVESTIGATE ALLEGED US BOMBING FOLLOWING SENT ACTION SAIGON INFO CAN THO NHA TRANG DANANG FROM BIEN HOA MAY 23 REPEATED FOR YOU QUOTE BIEN HOA 0138
TAGS: MARR, MOPS, PARM, PBOR, VC, PBOR
To: BUDAPEST
CINCPAC
EA
JAKARTA
JEC PARIS
O SAIGON

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OTTAWA
SECSTATE WASHDC
WARSAW
Type: TE
Markings: Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 30 JUN 2005

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